

GOVERNMENT AGENCY CONCLUSIONS RE: OUR CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Introduction:

Many people post messages on social media which falsely claim that the FBI during J. Edgar Hoover's tenure as FBI Director was hostile toward our civil rights movement and its leadership.

Below I quote from FBI and other agency publications which show how historically mistaken this criticism has been - and I include quotes from FBI monographs which were used to train its Special Agents.

In 1965, J. Edgar Hoover described the civil rights movement as "a great and too long neglected cause of human rights" in our country. [*FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, Introduction, April 1965].

After warning about radicals that had no genuine interest in advancing civil rights, Hoover observed in a December 1964 speech, that:

"Let me emphasize that the American civil rights movement is *not*, and has *never* been dominated by the communists--because the overwhelming majority of civil rights leaders in this country, both Negro and white, have recognized and rejected communism as a menace to the freedoms of all." [J. Edgar Hoover speech, 12/12/64, "*Our Heritage of Greatness*", page 7 - Hoover speech before Pennsylvania Society and the Society of Pennsylvania Women; bold emphasis on "not" and "never" in original document].

In November 1966, the FBI received an inquiry from a self-identified John Birch Society member who saw the above 1964 quote by Hoover in a letter-to-the-editor of his local newspaper and he wanted to know if the quote was an accurate reflection of Hoover's judgment both in 1964 and 1966. Hoover replied affirmatively and concluded: "This position remains essentially unchanged today." [FBI-HQ 62-104401, serial #3021, 11/15/66 Hoover reply to incoming Bircher inquiry].

Also see following Hoover/FBI and other agency comments :

"It would be absurd to suggest that the aspirations of Negroes for equality are communist inspired. This is demonstrably not true..." [J. Edgar Hoover speech, "*Faith In Freedom*," 12/4/63, page 6].

"In general, legitimate civil rights organizations have been successful in excluding Communists, although a few have received covert counseling from them and have even accepted them as members...The CP is not satisfied with this situation and is continually striving to infiltrate the civil rights movement at every level. " [J. Edgar Hoover, *U.S. News and World Report*, 11/1/65, page 46].

"It is no secret that one of the bitterest disappointments to communistic efforts in this Nation has been their failure to lure our Negro citizens into the party. Despite every type of propaganda boomed at our Nation's Negro citizens, they have never succumbed to the party's saccharine promises of a Communist 'Utopia'. This generation and generations to come for many years owe a tremendous debt to our Negro citizens who have consistently refused to surrender their freedoms for the tyranny of communism." [J. Edgar Hoover testimony before U.S. Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, 01/17/60, reprinted in March 1960 *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, page 7]

"The Communist Party USA, despite its concentrated efforts, has failed to attract even a significant minority of the Negroes in the United States to its program". [FBI monograph, "*The Communist Party and the Negro 1953-1956*", page ii]

<https://archive.org/details/FBIMonographCommunistPartyNegro19531956>

"Communists in the United States have attempted to infiltrate and gain control of legitimate Negro-fraternal, protest-and-improvement organizations. To date, their efforts have been unsuccessful on a state or national level, although there have been some instances where the Communist Party has gained control of isolated chapters." [FBI monograph, "*The Communist Party and the Negro 1953-1956*" page v].

In early April 1947, NAACP Executive Secretary Walter White wrote to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to request a statement by Hoover on the NAACP which the organization could use in a pamphlet it was preparing. Hoover replied with the following statement:

"Equality, freedom, and tolerance are essential in a democratic government. The NAACP has done much to preserve these principles and to perpetuate the desires of our founding fathers. With best wishes and kind regards. J. Edgar Hoover." [FBI-HQ 61-3176, serial #378X; J. Edgar Hoover 4/14/47 letter to Walter White.]

In 1964, J. Edgar Hoover met with American Legion National Commander Don Johnson. Hoover discussed his feud with Martin Luther King Jr. According to a FBI memo summarizing the meeting, Hoover gave this evaluation of NAACP Executive Secretary Roy Wilkins:

"He also referred to Roy Wilkins. He mentioned that Wilkins was a responsible type individual attempting to do a good job." [HQ 94-1-17998, serial #1741 which is an 11/11/64 memo from Assistant Director C.D. DeLoach regarding Hoover's meeting on 11/10/64 with American Legion National Commander Don Johnson, page 2]

In contrast to the position about the NAACP circulated by white supremacists and extreme right groups like the John Birch Society, the FBI considered NAACP leaders such as Walter White and Roy Wilkins to be responsible moderate anti-Communists and the FBI frequently praised their leadership of the NAACP. Roy Wilkins was one of the black leaders whom the FBI thought most desirable to replace Martin Luther King Jr. as the leading advocate for African-Americans.

A 1955 FBI memo summarized data in the Bureau's file on the NAACP with respect to Communist Party (CP) interest in the organization:

Page 1: "NAACP incorporated in New York City in 1911. Declared aim is to secure full citizenship for Negroes. Bureau is in receipt of reports since 1941 re: Communist attempts to infiltrate NAACP. CP has had measure of success in controlling isolated chapters but unable to dominate the organization on state or national level. National Convention of NAACP in 1955 reaffirmed stand taken at 1950 convention to oppose Communism...Dominant figures are Roy Wilkins and Thurgood Marshall, executive secretary and special counsel, respectively, who have been associated with CP front organizations in 1940's but now appear to be strongly anti-Communist.

Page 4: "All Negro Party members have been instructed to join NAACP chapters to exert their influence in NAACP programs. Local chapters in some localities, e.g Chicago, have been penetrated to the extent that CP members have become officers of these chapters. However, most chapters, as well as the national office, are acutely aware of the constant attempt on the part of the CP to dominate these local groups and are actively combating the Communists in their efforts." [HQ 61-3176, serial #1077; 10/21/55 memo from A.H. Belmont to L.V. Boardman.]

In April 1968, FBI Assistant Director William Sullivan prepared a paper for publication in *Religion In Life*, a journal produced by the University of North Carolina Law School. Sullivan was in charge of the Bureau's Domestic Intelligence Division.

In a section captioned "*Gains In Equality*", Sullivan praised "precedent-establishing Negroes (whom) through hard work and abundance of ability and talent have become nationally and internationally prominent."

Among the persons Sullivan cited as deserving of respect and praise and "outstanding recognition" were the following individuals whom bigots universally were hostile toward:

Thurgood Marshall, U.S. Supreme Court Justice and former General Counsel of NAACP; Robert C. Weaver, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; Ralph Bunche (who) "has ably served this country at the United Nations"; Carl Rowan "who has served his country with distinction"; Roy Wilkins, A. Philip Randolph and Whitney Young (who) "have used their great skill and resources to gain so much for their fellow Negroes through remedies available under the law." [William C. Sullivan, *Communism and the American Negro*, Winter 1968, *Religion in Life*, page 600].

OTHER AGENCY EVALUATIONS

"The Communist Party in this country has, from its inception, endeavored to attract Negroes to its ranks. At one stage of its existence the Party even undertook to establish a Negro nation in the deep South and through its Southern Conference for Human Welfare made an all-out effort to recruit large numbers of the Negro people. This attempt, like the Communist attempt to penetrate and control the N.A.A.C.P., resulted in failure." [Eleventh Report of the California Senate Fact-Finding Subcommittee on Un-American Activities, 1961, page 136].

Also see the following comments by the House Committee on Un-American Activities:

"The Communist Party in the United States of America, in its continuing efforts to infiltrate and destroy the Constitutional government of this country, has made the minority groups in the United States prime targets of attack...The fact that the Communist conspiracy has experienced so little success in attracting the American Negro to its cause reflects favorably on the loyalty and integrity of the vast majority of the 15,000,000 Negro citizens. To attest to this fact we restate the words of Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which appeared in the *Congressional Record* of January 26, 1953:

'We recently reviewed the origins of 5,395 of the leading members of the Communist Party. The results were most interesting. Only 411 were Negroes but of the remaining 4,984, we found that 4,555, (or 91 ½ percent) were either of foreign birth or born of foreign parents...The fact that only 411 Negroes were found in this select group is strong evidence that the American Negro is not hoodwinked by these false messiahs.'

"In furtherance of its traitorous design the Communist Party of the United States has exploited issues of genuine concern to the American Negro and all Americans." [Committee on Un-American Activities, U.S. House of Representatives, "*The American Negro in the Communist Party*" 12/22/54, page 1]

And in its "*Conclusion*", the Committee observed:

"From the facts set forth in this report, the committee can only conclude that the vast majority of Americans of the Negro race have consistently resisted the blandishments and treacherous promises offered them by the Communist conspirators." [Committee on Un-American Activities, U.S. House of Representatives, "*The American Negro in the Communist Party*" 12/22/54, page 13].

In addition, the FBI falsified most of the major arguments circulated by white supremacists and the extreme right concerning groups like Highlander Folk School of Monteagle TN which was falsely described by bigots as a "*Communist training school*" which was "*attended*" by Martin Luther King Jr.

A July 1963 FBI memo summarizes the FBI file on Highlander Folk School:

"Due to the interracial character of the School, it has been the subject of numerous allegations that it represented the headquarters of communism in east Tennessee. An extensive investigation was conducted in 1941 and 1942 as a result of the allegations. These allegations have never been substantiated and much of the information of a subversive derogatory nature concerning this School was later repudiated by the individuals who previously furnished the information...This organization has continuously been involved in the integration movement and as a result charges are being continuously made that it is 'communist'. These charges are based mainly on the opinion of the individuals making the charges that being pro-integration is being pro-communist." [FBI-HQ 64-7511, serial #286, July 26, 1963, F.J. Baumgardner to W.C. Sullivan].